



# WELCOME!



September 7, 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Ms. Johnson and I am enthusiastic about having your child in my science class this year! I know that we will have a productive year.



The Advanced Placement Environmental Science is a **college-level** class. This course requires a lot of work, dedication, and some sacrifice, but also really pays off. Students can choose to take the **national AP Exam** (scheduled for **May 6, 2013**) and will earn **3 college credits** if they pass the exam with a score of 3 or higher. This is essentially free college credit. **Even if your student does not pass the AP exam, s/he will gain valuable college & career skills!**

During the first half of the year, we will study how ecosystems function in the natural world. During the second half of the year, we will explore how humans interact with and impact our environment. This course is interdisciplinary because it uses all the other sciences to understand our complex world, involve data collection and interpretation, graphing, and evaluating the pros and cons of real-world, complex situations. The content is challenging and I expect this course will change the way your student views our planet.

**AP students need to be highly-motivated, independent learners.** I am happy to meet with students for extra help, but students can expect to **teach themselves about 40% of the material outside of class if they intend to pass the AP Exam.** I will give students the tools they need, but ultimately the learning depends on student initiative. You can follow along with what we're doing looking at the **class website: <http://MsJohnsonGWHS.wikispaces.com/>**

I require each student to bring the following items to class **every day beginning \_\_\_\_\_**: a **1" three-ring binder, pencil, blue or black pen, calculator and lined paper.** Binders will be collected and graded, and all work is expected to be organized according to section. Optional items include a ruler, highlighter, and colored pencils. Please see the attached "Shopping List" for materials that your child will need for my class; these should cost less than \$20.

**You** are the most important part of your child's education, so please voice questions and concerns with me any time through my **personal voicemail (267) 507-4947** or **email [kpjohnson@philasd.org](mailto:kpjohnson@philasd.org)** If you wish to meet with me, I will be happy to schedule an appointment after school or during my planning period (7:35-8:15 am). Finally, please attend our **Back to School Night on September 20<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 pm.**

*I look forward to working with you and your child!*

Sincerely,

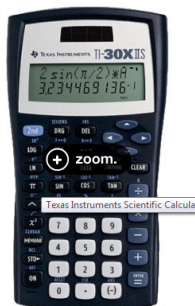
Ms. Kelsey Johnson, Room 324

# Shopping List and Daily Required Materials

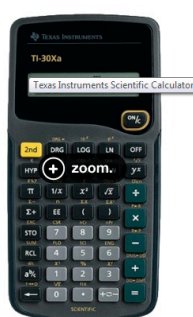
These items **MUST** to be brought to class every day:

- **Three-ring binder (1-inch spine, heavy duty).** Labeled in clear, **permanent marker on the front cover** with: student's first and last name, and science class period #. Use dividers to **create and label the following binder sections**:
  - 1) **"Course Information/Goals"**
    - a. Contents: All orientation sheets, binder rubrics, goal sheets and checklists.
  - 2) **"Pre-class"**
    - a. Contents: all pre-class assignments with the **most recent on top**.
  - 3) **"Classwork & Notes"**
    - a. Contents: All class notes and worksheets in chronological order with **most recent on top**.
  - 4) **"Homework"**
    - a. Contents: All hand-written homework assignments (including Core Concepts) and worksheets.
    - b. **Homework needs to be written in pencil or black ink.** We will make **corrections using blue ink**.
    - c. **Skip at least 3 lines between problems** to allow space for corrections.
    - d. Use the following header for your homework (see sample posted in the classroom or below):
 

Your name  
Ms. Johnson  
Class Period #  
Date
  - 5) **"Science Seminar"**
    - a. Contents: Keep all **current events notes & free-response questions** here.
  - 6) **"Evidence"**
    - a. Contents: Keep all **graded work** here in chronological order.
    - b. Also, keep **extra paper and other things that are not specified** in other sections.
- **BLUE ink pen (for corrections)**
- **2 Pencils (sharpened)**
- **Notebook paper** (looseleaf; wide-ruled is preferred but not required)
- **Scientific calculator that allows for exponents.**
  - Buttons may look like one of these: " $\wedge$ ", " $10^\wedge$ ", " $10^x$ ", "E", "EE", or "exp"
  - Examples include:



Texas Instruments Scientific Calculator 30XIIS  
Available at Target, CVS, etc, ~\$12-15

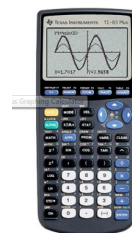


Texas Instruments Scientific Calculator 30XA  
Available at Target, Walmart, etc



Casio Scientific Calculator – Gray (FX300ES)  
\$12.99 at Target

Eventually, your child will need a graphing calculator in high school. Math teachers recommend students get these early to begin practicing. They are expensive new (\$90), but are sold used on eBay for \$30 or less.



Texas Instruments TI-83 Plus Graphing Calculator



# AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE 2011-12 SYLLABUS



Ms. Johnson  
[kpjohnson@philasd.org](mailto:kpjohnson@philasd.org)

George Washington High School  
Room 324

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## **MISSION**

My goals for this course are that students *learn to think critically and improve their knowledge and confidence in science*. Know that *all class rules and procedures are designed to increase student learning, citizenship, and enjoyment of science*.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Students will spend the first few days deciding what expectations are appropriate. Once we have reached consensus, please elaborate on each rule below:

1. BEING RESPECTFUL means \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. BEING RESPONSIBLE means \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. BEING PREPARED means \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*School rules always apply in the hallway, my classroom, and on buses (See Student Handbook).*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE BIG IDEAS:**

1. Science is a process
2. Earth is one interconnected system made of matter & energy
3. Energy conversions underlie all ecological processes
4. Humans alter natural systems
5. Environmental problems have a cultural & social context
6. Human survival is a function of sustainable practices

## **UNIT OUTLINES**

- Unit 0: Math & Graphing Skills Review
- Unit 1: Earth Systems & Resources
- Unit 2: Living World (Ecosystem Ecology, Evolution & Biodiversity)
- Unit 3: Population
- Unit 4: Land & Water Use
- Unit 5: Energy & Society
- Unit 6: Pollution
- Unit 7: Global change

## **GRADING**

I strongly recommend that students **keep all graded work as “evidence” and double-check the grade I calculate for them.** This is good practice for college and basic accounting, as well as allows them to contest a potential mistake with the grades.

### *Grade Weighting*

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>% of Overall Grade</i>
TESTS & QUIZZES	40
PROJECTS, LABS & PRESENTATIONS	40
HOMEWORK	10*
PARTICIPATION	10

\*A note about grades: **Students earn a bonus in their GPA for Advanced Placement classes: multiply the grade by 1.2.** For example, and 80% counts as a 96%. Therefore, it looks better on transcripts to have **a B in an AP class than an A in an average class.** Colleges are looking for students who challenge themselves!

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONOR**

You are expected to act with full academic integrity **at all times.** Writing your name at the top of a paper represents *a contract* between you and me that means you neither gave nor received unfair help. If you feel tempted to copy another person’s work or to share your own work, remember that this defeats the purpose of education. If I become aware of such transgressions, they will result in failing grades and disciplinary action. Make good choices!

Working with others is an acceptable practice in college and most workplaces. Therefore, I encourage students to share ideas and to form study groups outside of class. However, working together looks like a discussion of ideas, **not** splitting up an assignment into pieces, completing one piece, and giving each other the answers. **Everything you turn in** should be in *your own, original words* and something that *you could explain to me* in a conversation.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

**Extra credit is generally not available in this AP class.** However, extra credit assignments will be approved on a case-by-case basis and require a written proposal ahead of time.

## **EMAIL ETTIQUETTE**

Have you ever thought about how you should contact adults through email? All electronic communication with teachers and other professionals is a formal representation of yourself. When you contact me by email, I expect you to use your best spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Emoticons are acceptable. ☺

# Science Policies



## Lateness to class

- Pre-class assignments are often quizzes and are due five minutes after the bell rings. If you are late to class, you miss these points.
- Skipped detentions result in an in-house suspension.

## Late work

- Homework is turned in at the beginning of class as students enter the classroom. Any work turned in after the collection is considered late.
- The purpose of homework is to stay up-to-date with class content *and* to practice study habits independently. I encourage students to complete work even if it is late. **Students may submit late homework IF they complete it in my presence (before school, during lunch, or after school) before the test for that unit.**
- **Late work will earn a *maximum of half credit*.** (This is still an “F”).
- Students are eligible for extra credit **only after** completing all assigned work.
- Major projects and lab reports may not be submitted late. That is unfair to the students who worked hard to complete it on time.

## Absent work

- Students must always show me documentation of excused absences. Prior notification is best, but I understand it is not always possible.
- Students with excused absences have the same number of days to make up the work as the number of days they were absent.
- It is the student's responsibility to obtain all missed assignments from the file folders hanging in the classroom **promptly**, which are updated every day. I encourage students to also use a “buddy system” with a friend in class. **It is the students’ responsibility to seek out the work they missed during absences.**
- Missed tests or quizzes for an excused absence need to be made up before school, after school, or during the student’s lunch period the following day.
- **Work missed for unexcused absences will not receive credit.** This includes music practice, sports, or other school activities if the student does not tell me *ahead of time*.
- **Quizzes or tests missed during an unexcused absence(s) may not be made up.**

## Cell Phones/iPods/Electronics

- Cell phones are inappropriate in the classroom. They are to be **turned off and out of sight** in my classroom. Period.

## Detentions

- **I hold detentions after school beginning exactly at 2:45 pm.** Detentions typically last 15 minutes for a first offense and 30 minutes for a second offense; however, their duration will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Given the advance notice, it is *the student's responsibility* to modify his/her schedule and make transportation arrangements to enable him/her to attend detention.
- Any student who fails to attend, or arrives late, to my detention will be written up.

## Severe Clause

- Students who choose to use profane language, fight, or damage property will be promptly written up to the disciplinarians.
  - Using obscene language or gestures, making unreasonable noise, fighting or threatening are *illegal* and defined as *disorderly conduct*. This behavior has no place in school.
  - See Student Handbook (page 34).

I encourage ALL students to **make good choices**. You can count on me to do my job, and I am counting on you to do yours. I look forward to you being your best!

Sincerely,

Ms. Kelsey Johnson  
George Washington High School



# Tips for Success

*“It doesn’t matter what you do, it matters how you do it.”*

**Success is defined in different ways by different people. I expect sincere effort; no exceptions, no excuses.**

**PARENTS:** There are several ways you can help your child succeed in my challenging science class. Here are some suggestions of things that you probably already do:

- ✚ **Show interest:** Ask your child what s/he learned in school each day. This simple routine will help students review and find gaps in their understanding. There should never be a day in which we “did nothing.”
- ✚ Emphasize the importance of effort and *earning* grades. Please monitor whether your child is completing his/her homework each night, and help him/her **establish a regular time and space to work** (away from the TV and other distractions and with good lighting). You can double-check what assignments your child may have by looking at the list on my website: <https://msjohnsongwhs.wikispaces.com/>
- ✚ Encourage your child to **speak up early with questions/concerns**. I am available before and after school, and hold walk-in tutoring Tuesdays and Wednesdays until 3:30. Students should not hesitate to ask me for help: this is my job and I take it seriously.
- ✚ Ask your child to see his/her grade. I am learning the school district’s **online grading system** and will send home mid-term progress reports showing your to support your child.
- ✚ Encourage your child to use the “**buddy system**”: make two friends in each class they can call for help if they’re absent, stuck on homework, or need a reminder about something.
- ✚ **Praise your child for doing well.** This is a challenging class, and your child can be proud of his/her success!!

**STUDENTS:** This course should require you to think and practice. If you **have a plan** from the very beginning, you may be surprised about how much easier things are.

➤ **Organize for Success**

1. **If you have a desk:** clear out a drawer tonight and place the following things in it: **pens, pencils, colored pencils, pencil sharpener, stapler, staples, paper clips, notebook paper, ruler, scissors, a calendar** (the school one is perfect) and a good, up-to-date dictionary. Clear off the top of the desk of everything except a clock and a lamp. If you are permitted, tack the calendar on the wall in front of your eyes.
2. **If you do not have a desk:** find a box (such as a large shoebox) and place the same items that are listed in item 1 above. The box is your ‘**mobile office**’ and is ready to make its nightly migration to the kitchen table or wherever you do your homework.

## ➤ Plan for Success

1. **Prioritize** your tasks by doing your **toughest homework first**, when you are the most awake and alert (do the easy stuff afterwards!). **Split up huge assignments** into manageable pieces and do something else in between.
2. Try to **plan ahead** as much as possible. **Mark due dates and tests on your calendar** in a *wild color!* Schedule a time to get these big things done because they count a lot in your grades. For example, circle the dates on your calendar for the end of the marking period, midterms, and final exams, and try to keep other work to a minimum at those times. If you are a good employee and ask for lighter workloads at certain times, good employers will try to help.
3. Try to be sensible. If you listen to music while you work, be sure that it **promotes an atmosphere for studying** (when I work, for example, I cannot listen to music with lyrics). Different strokes for different folks, but if the music ‘moves’ you too much, it is doubtful that it helps you learn. Television is never acceptable when you are trying to concentrate.
4. If a subject **starts to get you down, tell a parent and see the teacher immediately**. Perhaps you can avoid real grief later if you attack the problem early.
5. It is your responsibility to **find out what you missed when you are absent**. Asking a teacher during class is *not* the appropriate time. See the “Missed work” folder first.
6. Keep a list of **“People you can count on”** tacked to the wall next to your calendar. These do not have to be your dearest friends; instead, they should be reliable people who will be able to tell you what assignments you missed. **Get the phone numbers of two dependable peers from each class for which you receive homework**, and call them the nights you are absent. Be proactive!

If you are absent, call these people and/or check the class website. Get the assignments. Even if you are too sick to do them, at least you have some idea of what is happening. If, by chance, you feel well enough, you might even get some done!! NEVER WAIT UNTIL YOU RETURN TO SCHOOL TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU MISSED. THAT PUTS YOU DOUBLY BEHIND.

7. Last but not least: SEND YOUR PARENTS TO BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT!!! I know, I know, they’ve been to them before. At the very least, your parents will understand better when you tell them, “That Ms. Johnson ...”. Seriously, **Open House is no less important in high school than it is in elementary school**. Parents and students alike mistakenly think that they out-grow the need to go to these things. So, be certain that your parent(s)/guardian(s) put aside an evening for open house. I will stay as late as necessary to meet with everyone.